

SYN. NO. _____

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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

June 10, 2003

Last year the Board of Supervisors recognized the Whale Rescue Team for its partnership with the County of Los Angeles in rescuing over 1000 distressed sea mammals along our coastline. For over 20 years, County Lifeguards, Animal Control, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard have relied on the Whale Rescue Team to respond to injured sea mammals and birds that find themselves in distress on our shores. The Whale Rescue Team has never failed to live up to its mission and has saved the County of Los Angeles millions of dollars over the last two decades by providing a needed service for a mere \$1 per year.

As successful as these rescue efforts are, the Whale Rescue Team is hampered by its lack of a permanent site which can be used to house distressed sea mammals during rehabilitation. This was most recently demonstrated during the domoic acid poisoning that killed 685 sea lions, 75 common dolphins and 30 sickened pelicans last spring. A

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second year of domoic acid poisoning is again threatening our coast as over 300 ailing or dead sea lions and dolphins have already beached themselves this year. The only facility equipped to handle these sick animals is the Marine Mammal Care Center in San Pedro. This facility can only handle a limited number of these sickened animals and is forced to triage many, leaving them on the beach. A second rescue facility would do much to alleviate this strain on the center's limited resources.

The Whale Rescue Team has secured private funding to construct a marine mammal rescue center and has requested our assistance in identifying a site in close proximity to the coastline. The new center can be used to rehabilitate and care for distressed sea mammals as well as serve as an educational resource to County residents.

I THEREFORE MOVE, that the CAO, Department of Beaches and Harbors, and County Lifeguards seek to identify a three acre site that can:

- a) be provided as a long-term lease to the Whale Rescue Team;
- b) be used for the construction and operation of a rehabilitation and care facility for distressed sea mammals paid for by the Whale Rescue Team; and
- c) Report back your findings within 60 days